

Horizon

A REVIEW OF LITERATURE & ART

W. H. Auden

H. E. Bates

John Betjeman

Cyril Connolly

Walter de la Mare

Louis MacNeice

J. B. Priestley

Frederic Prokosch

Herbert Read

Criticism by Geoffrey Grigson

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Edited by Cyril Connolly

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EDITED BY CYRIL CONNOLLY

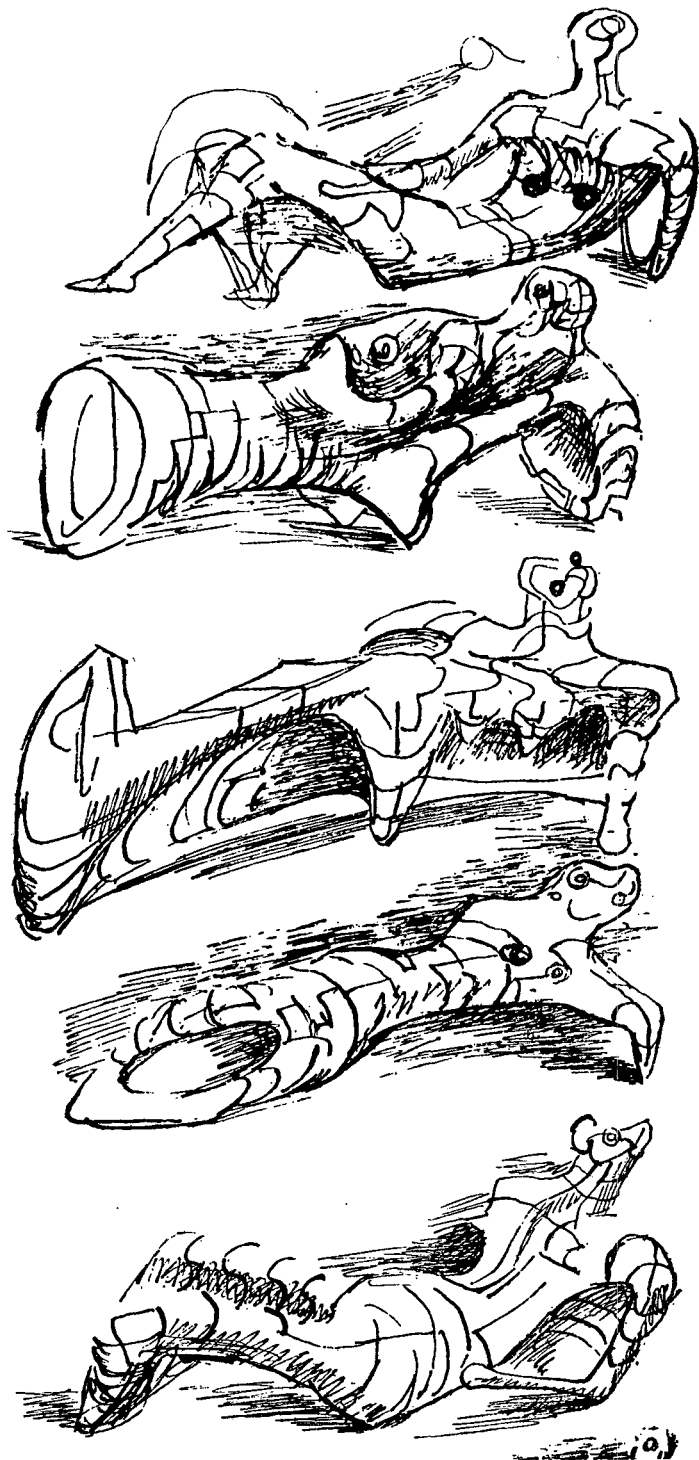
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COVER DESIGN BY JOHN PIPER

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Henry Moore

Reclining Figures

COMMENT

A magazine should be the reflection of its time, and one that ceases to reflect this should come to an end. The moment we live in is archaistic, conservative and irresponsible, for the war is separating culture from life and driving it back on itself, the impetus given by Left Wing politics is for the time exhausted, and however much we should like to have a paper that was revolutionary in opinions or original in technique, it is impossible to do so when there is a certain suspension of judgement and creative activity. The aim of *Horizon* is to give to writers a place to express themselves, and to readers the best writing we can obtain. Our standards are aesthetic, and our politics are in abeyance. This will not always be the case, because as events take shape the policy of artists and intellectuals will become clearer, the policy which leads them to economic security, to the atmosphere in which they can create, and to the audience by whom they will be appreciated. At the moment civilization is on the operating table and we sit in the waiting room. For so far this is a war without the two great emotions which made the Spanish conflict real to so many of us. It is a war which awakens neither Pity nor Hope, and what began as a routine police operation, a military sanction, is now hardening into the grim prehistorical necessity of Keeping Alive.

The original *Life and Letters* which flourished ten years ago had no political aspect. But the change that has come over literature in the last decade is an increased consciousness of its political and economic basis. This is the only Marxist lesson that writers have soundly learnt, and so *Horizon* will have political articles, though it will never imitate those journals, in which, like pantomime donkeys, the political front legs kick and entangle the literary hind ones. *Horizon* is concerned with the general issues of peace and war and will consider the origins, ethics, conduct, and

conclusion of them in an enquiry open to the most diverse points of view, and for which the articles by Priestley and Read form a starting point.

Mrs. Woolf, in her pamphlet on reviewing, published by the Hogarth Press, maintains that the ordinary review is useless to author and reader; that it would be better for the general public if brief synopses of books were given together with a sign to denote approval or disapproval; that if the author wants criticism, he should pay the reviewer a private fee and consult him; and that editors would do better to spend money on a revival of the *Essay and Criticism* than the *Review*. *Horizon* being interested in imaginative writing, has no room for regular features or chronicles of the arts, and there will only be two kinds of review—the critical essay and general discussion of ideas, or the brief short notice. There will be no half-hearted comment on the half-dead.

To those whose lives are tormented by the notion of talent in others a magazine with well-known names appears middlebrow, and without them cliquey. Such critics are implacable, so we address *Horizon* to those who generously enjoy quality in writing, and ask them to help make us known. *Horizon* will appear regularly after this number on the fifteenth of each month. The February number will include poems by George Barker, MacNeice, Betjeman, Day Lewis; a reminiscence of Henry James by Sir Hugh Walpole; Byron on 'Federal Union', 'Communist Policy and the Intellectuals' by Howard Evans, 'Kilvert's Village' by William Plomer, September Journal by Stephen Spender, and stories by Elizabeth Bowen and G. F. Green.

Horizon welcomes contributions, subscriptions, and comment. If you like this number please show it to your friends and ask them to subscribe.

FREDERIC PROKOSCH

MOLIERE

Molière, with his deliberate eye and urbane
Pen, pierced the skull: in the tart elegance of his verse
As in a collector's palm, lay man's split, membranous brain.

What he said about avarice, affectation, death,
Was clad in such lucidity—it almost seemed
That there was little he intuitively discerned or even dreamed

Of that horrible disorderly whirlpool, man's desire:
The hooked, retaliating nightmare, the dirty tears, the
 hissing breath—
To tell of these would demand a pen dipped not in ink but
 in fire!

And yet, he knew, he knew; and all those others knew as
 well.
Through the clipped and ordered park, the salon, the
 avenue,
They walked, rosy with the approaching glow and spectacle
 of hell.

Stricken already with a common and incurable disease,
Célimène, Alceste, Tartuffe, Sganarelle,
Tufted, colourful as idols, passed and bowed among the
 maple trees.

Rain fell on the statues, darkened the cathedrals. Rain
Decade upon decade darkened the villas and the quais,
The maple trees and beech trees hung moping above the
 Seine.

The momentary perfection of a gesture held in its control
All the heat and squabble of men caught in an entertaining
mood,
Pinning to a couplet the queer, brief spasms of the human
soul.

Flawless, tremendous actors in an antiquated play,
They march through album after album as through the
darkness of a wood,
Bearing civilization, like a mask, from yesterday into
to-day—

A civilization as marvellous, and as far, far away
As that of Rameses: the intricately spun
Laws of reason lie burnished like hieroglyphics in the sun

And whatever it illuminated, whatever it gave
Of learning and perception in wave upon black wave
Lies lost as utterly as Othello's howl, or Dido's unforgettable
cave.

WALTER DE LA MARE

THE OTHERS

‘Friendly?’ ‘I think.’ ‘Or—neutral?’ ‘How to tell?’
 ‘Not hostile?’ ‘Well, who then would intercede?’
 ‘And do you rap? Or crystal gaze? Or set
 Traps in the dark?—glass, Ouija, or planchette?
 A Madame Medium pay? Book—candle—bell?’
 ‘Oh no; I sit and read?’
 ‘Or merely sit!’

‘Sometimes. Why not? The air,
 Wild Ariel’s air, must thrill with secrecies
 Beyond the tentacles of sense. *We* share
 Our thoughts and feelings only by surmise.
 You speak: I watch and listen. But faith alone
 Vows that the wellspring of your life’s my own.
 And when goodbye is said, and comes the night,
 What proof has each of either—out of sight?
 Yes, even now—to eyes of love how clear!—
 It is the ghost in you I hold most dear.
 When then you challenge me, in mockery or dismay,
 My evidence for *them*, I can but say,
 The deeper my small solitude may be
 The surer it of unseen company.
 It haunts with loveliness this silent night.
 “Evils?” They too may prowl. ‘Gainst them we had best
 Guard unrelentingly both mind and breast.
 I cannot answer, *No*, then. Only pray
 Fortress of life and love the soul shall stay.
 And “good-night” come . . . Well, this shall be confessed:
 It grieves me to the heart when, blessing the Blest,
 I add, Alas!—what truth dare not betray—
 They are the happier when I am away.’

W. H. AUDEN

CRISIS

“ Of my sowing such straw I reap. O human folk, why set the heart there
where exclusion of partnership is necessary ? ” Purgatorio XIV. 85-87.

Where do They come from, those whom we so much dread,
As on our dearest location falls the chill
Of their crooked wing and endangers
The melting friend, the aquaduct, the flower?

Terrible Presences that the ponds reflect
Back at the married, and when the blond boy
Bites eagerly into the shining
Apple, emerge in their shocking fury.

And we realise the woods are deaf and the sky
Nurses no one, and we are awake and these
Like farmers have purpose and knowledge,
And upon us their hate is directed.

We are the barren pastures to which they bring
The resentment of outcasts; on us they work
Out their despair; they wear our weeping
As the disgraceful badge of their exile.

O we conjured them here like a lying map:
Desiring the extravagant joy of life
We lured with a mirage of orchards
Fat in the lazy climate of refuge.

Our money sang like streams on the aloof peaks
Of our thinking that beckoned them on like girls;
Our culture like a West of wonder
Shone a solemn promise in their faces.

We expected the beautiful or the wise,
Ready to see a charm in our childish fib,
Pleased to find nothing but stones and
Able at once to create a garden.

But those who come are not even children with
The big indiscriminate eyes we had lost,
Occupying our narrow spaces
With their anarchist vivid abandon.

They arrive already adroit, having learnt
Restraint at the table of a father's rage;
In a mother's distorting mirror
They discovered the Meaning of Knowing.

These pioneers have long adapted themselves
To the night and the nightmare; they come equipped
To reply to terror with terror,
With lies to unmask the least deception.

For a future of marriage nevertheless
The bed is prepared; though all our whiteness shrinks
From the hairy and clumsy bridegroom,
We conceive in the shuddering instant.

For the barren must wish to bear though the Spring
Punish; the crooked that dreads to be straight
Cannot alter its prayer and summons
Out of the dark a horrible rector.

O the striped and vigorous tiger can move
With style through the borough of murder; the ape
Is really at home in the parish
Of grimacing and licking; but we have

Failed as their pupils. Our tears well from a love
We have never outgrown; our cities predict
More than we hope; even our armies
Have to express our need of forgiveness.

JOHN BETJEMAN
UPPER LAMBOURNE

Up the ash tree climbs the ivy,
Up the ivy climbs the sun
With a twenty thousand pattering
Has a valley breeze begun
Feathery ash, neglected elder
Shift the shade and make it run,

Shift the shade toward the nettles,
And the nettles set it free
To streak the stained Carrara headstone
Where, in nineteen twenty three,
He who trained a hundred winners
Paid The Final Entrance Fee.

Leathery limbs of Upper Lambourne,
Leathery skin from sun and wind,
Leathery breeches, spreading stables,
Shining saddles left behind,
To the down the string of horses
Canters out of sight and mind.

Feathery ash in leathery Lambourne
Waves above the sarsen stone
And Edwardian plantations
So coniferously moan
As to make the swelling downland,
Far surrounding, seem their own.

LOUIS MACNEICE
CUSHENDUN

Fuchsia and ragweed and the distant hills
Made as it were out of clouds and sea:
All night the bay is plashing and the moon
 Marks the break of the waves.

Limestone and basalt and a whitewashed house
With passages of great stone flags
And a walled garden with plums on the wall
 And a bird piping in the night.

Forgetfulness: brass lamps and copper jugs
And home-made bread and the smell of turf or flax
And the air a glove and the water lathering easy
 And convolvulus in the hedge.

Only in the dark green room beside the fire
With the curtains drawn against the winds and waves
There is a little box with a well-bred voice;
 What a place to talk of War.

August, 1939

LOUIS MACNEICE

THE BRITISH MUSEUM READING ROOM

Under the hive-like dome the stooping haunted readers
Go up and down the alleys, tap the cells of knowledge—
 Honey and wax, the accumulation of years . . .
Some on commission, some for the love of learning,
Some because they have nothing better to do
Or because they hope these walls of books will deaden
 The drumming of the demon in their ears.

Cranks, hacks, poverty-stricken scholars,
In pince-nez, period hats or romantic beards
 And cherishing their hobby or their doom,
Some are too much alive and some are asleep
Hanging like bats in a world of inverted values,
Folded up in themselves in a world which is safe and silent:
 This is the British Museum Reading Room.

Out on the steps in the sun the pigeons are courting,
Puffing their ruffs and sweeping their tails or taking
 A sun-bath at their ease
And under the totem poles—the ancient terror—
Between the enormous fluted Ionic columns
There seeps from heavily jowled or hawk-like foreign faces
 The guttural sorrow of the refugees.

July, 1939

J. B. PRIESTLEY

THE WAR—AND AFTER

People still write to me to say that we are at war because we like war. This is not true. Apart from some young Nazi hotheads and officers hoping for quick promotion, nobody now likes and wants war. The Nazis based their whole technique on this fact. In a really belligerent world they could never have brought off their remarkable series of *coups*. The trick was to threaten war in a world ready to pay almost any price for peace. The Nazis did not want war but the spoils of it. Collecting those spoils was rapidly becoming the national industry of the Third Reich.

Other people, who applauded Leftish writers like myself when we said that Britain should make a stand against the Nazis, now revile us as warmongers because we believe in the stand that Britain is now making. Why? Can you disintegrate the Gestapo by passing a few resolutions in Hampstead? We passed thousands of resolutions, spoke eloquently of peace and goodwill, but the dark stain spread over the map of Central Europe, the Gestapo moved in, and the refugees came thick and fast. Bernard Shaw says it is all right now, because his friend Stalin has everything under control. Well, Stalin may have made special arrangements to see that Shaw comes to no harm, but the rest of us in Western Europe do not feel quite so sure of our fate, especially those of us who do not share Shaw's curious admiration for dictators.

Then we have those people who say that we have no right to defy the employers of the Gestapo and the owners of the concentration camps because the British Empire is not an earthly paradise. Look at the Kaffirs in Johannesburg! What about India? I have long been in favour of transforming the British Empire into something nearer what it pretends to be, but I believe we shall have a better

chance of doing that when the Nazis are no longer screaming menaces and cracking whips at our heels. In fact, we shall have a better chance of doing anything worth doing. On the other hand, if they stay at our heels, we shall be lucky to get off with our lives.

There has been a great deal of confused talk and writing about war aims. It should be understood that a general settlement of the world cannot possibly be part of our war aims, if only because all the powers not at war must have their say in the world's affairs. What Britain and France have to do is to put an end to that intolerable state of things in which, every six months, Goebbels transfers his atrocity stories to another neighbouring country and Hitler proceeds to mobilise again. It is no use our all becoming entangled in elaborate quarrels about the ultimate world order with the Nazis still round the corner. In my opinion it is quite impossible to do anything with a world that may be dominated at any moment by the Nazis. But then I do not take my view of these people from their own propaganda (the poor victims of Versailles who only ask for a sporting chance) but from Rauschning and others who are acquainted with dynamic-revolutionary technique.

On the other hand, it would be stupid not to entertain some idea of a possible new world order. Nor do I agree with the pessimists, who point out that here we are with another war on our hands and nobody ever learns anything. The atmosphere of this war is so different from the last, which at first was like a long hysterical Bank Holiday, that it seems to me humanity has learnt a great deal. We are nearly all ripe for a change in international affairs. Notice the ordinary folk, especially the younger ones, everywhere. With them the natural drift of their tastes and feelings has been away from nationalism and towards internationalism. They have to be hectored and dragooned into nationalism. Left to themselves, with aviation, sport, films, dances, fashions and the like, and they are cosmopolitan and international. Curiously enough, the only exception is perhaps to be found in Soviet Russia.

Federal Union is being widely discussed as a form the new world order might take. It is a fruitful idea, but at the moment I think it is being rushed a bit too much. Thus, before Britain takes its place in a federation of democracies, it would do no harm if Britain became a good deal more truly democratic than it is at present. For years now it has been sliding back from rather than achieving a true democracy. The Right Wing has made too many gains during this decade of the Thirties. That slow invisible revolution, upon which we used to pride ourselves, seems to me to have been checked. That is why the atmosphere here has begun to seem so stuffy and infertile. For my part I would hesitate to saddle any federation with the Britain we have now. The political, financial and social engine badly needs overhauling. It is a pity some of our Left friends, instead of giving themselves a headache wondering what attitude Stalin will ask them to adopt next, do not demand that we should see this democracy for which we are supposed to be fighting.

The new peace will not be much better than the old one, however, if we allow ourselves to be represented everywhere by foreign office experts. These gentlemen tend either to follow tradition, which is precisely what we do not want, or become the mouthpieces of narrow economic interests. If you desire to turn out a brand-new article, obviously it is no use setting the same old machinery to work. I am old enough to remember that, in spite of silly catch-cries, there was plenty of good will about, twenty years ago, but it was never adequately represented. The old machinery was started again. Geneva became the most cynical city in Europe.

Is it significant that here at last is a war that has not an obvious economic motive? For I do not believe that we are fighting because some imperial traders want to keep their mines and plantations, capitalists wish to protect their investments, and merchants hope for bigger markets when their rivals are defeated. And I am wondering if Peter Druecker is right when he declares that we have come to

the end of the long era of Economic Man. What happens if we drop the idea that man is primarily a producer and consumer? Nobody can complain that man lacks inventive-ness in the sphere of production, and this war, like the last, is certainly going to stimulate his ingenuity and productive power. We can take that for granted. But I am wondering if, once you have raised the lowest scale of living, which is something we have not properly tried to do yet in Britain, you could not move forward then on a non-economic theory of human life. The Nazis have had a wild shot at it, but unfortunately their very undistinguished minds have been dominated by basement gangster values.

What do human beings want most? The answer appears to be, Security and Freedom. Security comes first, for if you do not know when your children will have their next meal, you are not interested in the refinements of political theory. (This fact is apt to be overlooked by the democracies.) On the other hand, the point at which the demand for security changes into the desire for freedom is soon reached. (This fact is overlooked by the totalitarian states.) Security-at-the-expense-of-freedom only seems to apply with most people to elementary needs and does not apply to radio sets, cars, tiled bathrooms, antique furniture, collections of etchings, and the like. Freedom, by which I do not mean anything transcendental but the absence of the censor, the informer, propaganda-at-all-costs, forced labour, and the whole dreadful paraphernalia of the police state, comes long before these things are reached, at least among the healthy-minded. It seems nothing while you have it. But it seems everything when you have lost it. Ask the nearest refugee.

It may be, however, that there is something in the modern world, no matter whether it accepts capitalist democracy, communism, Nazism, Fascism, that is bent on rapidly reducing the number of the healthy-minded, is addling the wits of man, is making it harder and harder to be easy, merry, affectionate and wise. It may be that all this fuss about machinery does some damage to the

imagination, that life in our huge idiotic cities poisons the psyche, that too many people secretly regard their own activities with contempt, that we are creating an atmosphere, in peace as well as in war, in which the spirit cannot flower freely, that our inability to answer the major questions of life and our frequent pretence that therefore they do not still exist are producing profound and terrible conflicts. Perhaps where we need it most, we have no Maginot Line.

HERBERT READ

AT THE MOMENT OF WRITING

I give my contribution to this discussion a temporizing title because the forces engaged in the war change front so completely from time to time that only a mind as agile as a communist's can meet each phase with a ready "analysis". At the moment of writing the Empire and France seem strongly united and comparatively consistent in their attitude. They are no doubt embarrassed by their commitments to Poland and Czechoslovakia, now represented by shadow governments of exiles; and there are mutterings of discontent in India, South Africa and to some slight extent on the Home Front. But I think we have to admit that bored as most of us are with the war, there is no considerable opposition to its continuance. The general state of opinion in France and Great Britain might best be described as *fatalistic*.

On the other side, at the moment of writing, Germany is isolated. The understanding with Russia does not seem to amount to more than a non-intervention agreement: Russia will do nothing to help the capitalist governments of Great Britain and France; but she is equally determined to avoid fighting on the side of the anomalous government of Germany. Like most of us, Russia is waiting for something to happen inside Germany.

In a military sense, the war is a deadlock, and it is difficult to see how it can "loosen up" in any decisive way. As a result of this deadlock the most considerable struggle is going on in non-military spheres—namely, in economics, diplomacy and propaganda.

Whether in due course we can exhaust Germany economically is a question which I cannot answer. It would seem

in any case to be a long-term policy, and meanwhile a decision may be reached in the other spheres, diplomacy and propaganda.

These two spheres are interrelated. The sympathy we can win in other countries depends partly, of course, on the economic bribes we can offer them. But no real support will come unless we can also win the confidence of neutral countries and persuade them that it is equally their battle which we are fighting.

Diplomacy is the staff-work of such a war of persuasion; but the force comes from the vitality and appeal of the ideas which we express as a nation and as an alliance. For this reason our intellectuals are really our first-line troops, and on their efficiency will depend the outcome of the war.

The intellect cannot be conscripted. Its workings are spontaneous; its operations are individual and secret. It is rendered completely ineffective by regimentation, by false directions, and by hypocrisy. It can only come into action when it is on the side of truth.

Do the war aims of the Allies represent a body of truth to which the intellect can pledge its services? That, it seems to me, is the essential question in this discussion.

From the marxist and fascist point of view (the singular is intentional) these aims are an ideological facade for imperialist aggression. It may be true that we do not want more colonies or to extend our empire in any way; but we mean to defend what we have got, which is an unfair share, and between such defence and aggression there is no essential difference.

Let us admit so much. But what of the other side? Germany claims, not very convincingly, that she has not got sufficient *Lebensraum* for her population of 80 millions. Nor has Belgium, nor has Italy, nor, for that matter, has Great Britain. Such claims for *Lebensraum* are really a naive and impossible attempt to solve what is actually an economic problem. There is plenty of elbow-room in Germany: lacking, however, are the natural resources to ensure a high standard of living for the 80 millions by

present methods of production and distribution. It is conceivable that socialised production "financed" by socialised credit would completely change the situation. In any case, the problem is not solved by the extension of national frontiers or the acquisition of colonies; for these involve the taking over of existing populations which are sometimes worse off economically than the population of the step-mother country. There is good reason to believe that the extension of Germany's *Lebensraum* by the incorporation of Austria, Czechoslovakia and Poland has merely intensified her economic problems. The addition of a few barren tracts in equatorial Africa would not help matters to any appreciable extent.

The truth about all this question of imperialism, capitalism, unemployment, stakhanovism, etc. is that the whole world is suffering from the effects of an economic crisis, which crisis is due essentially to a disparity between the rates of production and consumption. The remedy must, of course, be found on the consumption side. The restrictive control of production, including the deliberate destruction of surplus supplies of food, is a criminal action which would only have entered the minds of desperate men. But the increase of consumption involves problems of monetary exchange, currency and credit which strike at the whole basis of the capitalist system. Yet on the solution of these problems depends the whole future of our civilization.

Now let us return to the war. With every nation, including all the neutrals, including the United States and Russia*, in the grip of this economic crisis, it is futile to go about bleating in the marxist jargon of 1867. The acquisition of markets for export or investment has become

*Admittedly the crisis has its special aspects in Russia, due to the centralised control of production and distribution; but Russia is involved in the general crisis, for otherwise she would not be compelled to export foodstuffs badly needed for her own under-nourished population, nor to resort to the capitalist devices of investment and taxation. Russia's problem may be one of the under-production of capital goods; but in any case, it arises from an unbalanced economy which can only be regulated by participating in the equally unbalanced economy of the rest of the world.

a subordinate aspect of the problem: all the markets of the world in the hands of one nation would not solve the problem even for that one nation.

The war is a localised and comparatively insignificant aspect of this general problem. For that reason it is quite irrelevant to demand its cessation: you might as well demand the cessation of accidents on the roads. War is merely an epiphenomenon of the crisis. If we stop it, here and now, it will sooner or later break out again on another front, in another form. The only way to stop the war is to solve the economic crisis.

Meanwhile we hear the words liberty, freedom, tolerance. Very good words, but do they represent anything real in the context of the economic crisis? In my opinion they do—something very real. I believe that the crisis can only be solved in the spirit, and by men imbued with the spirit, of these words. The people who decry these words—communists, fascists, totalitarians and authoritarians of every kind—are people who want to solve the crisis by violent means. That is to say, they do not want a general solution of the crisis, but a partial solution which will temporarily benefit their country, their party or their class at the expense of the rest of the world. Communism (Stalinist version) is a solution of the problem for the benefit of a bureaucratic élite; fascism is a solution of the problem for the benefit of a political élite; imperialism is a solution of the problem for the benefit of a plutocratic oligarchy.

The only fair solution of the problem is one which will be reached by free and unprejudiced discussion—in other words, by the methods of democratic socialism. I believe that democratic socialism is the next desirable stage in political evolution, and I welcome any force or tendency which leads in that direction. I do not believe that democratic socialism is the final stage or in itself free from intolerable defects—but that is another story. The immediate aim should be the democratisation of the constituent elements of a European federation, the reorganization of production and distribution on an international

egalitarian basis, and the concurrent transformation of the capitalist system.

In an obscure way British and American statesmen—certainly statesmen like Roosevelt and Halifax—do seem to realize that the capitalist game is up, and they are groping in the direction of a democratic revolution. They have all the ingrained habits of their class and tradition to fight against; but there is in their pronouncements a note of sincerity and it is a democratic note. They will probably soon be disowned by their capitalist supporters, but a democratic socialist party will inevitably come into power in all the advanced industrial countries of the world, and such a party will create the *economic* basis of a permanent peace. It should also have the will and the power to create the no less necessary psychological basis for such a peace.

To stop the war, besides being a futile gesture, would leave the crisis unresolved. It would postpone the necessity of a solution. Therefore, in a spirit of fatalism (which my opponents are welcome to call a spirit of sadism) I say: Let the war go on. It is the shortest and therefore the best way to replace the capitalist system by a democratic system, and which will at the same time rescind those partial and tyrannical solutions of the crisis represented by the Soviet Union no less than by Germany and Italy.

CYRIL CONNOLLY

THE ANT-LION

The Maures are my favourite mountains, a range of old rounded mammalian granite which rise three thousand feet above the coast of Provence. In summer they are covered by dark forests of cork and pine, with paler interludes on the northern slopes of bright splay-trunked chestnut, and an undergrowth of arbutus and bracken. There is always water in the Maures, and the mountains are green throughout the summer, never baked like the limestone, or like the Southern Alps a slagheap of gritty oystershell. They swim in a golden light in which the radiant ebony green of their vegetation stands out against the sky, a region hardly inhabited, yet friendly as those dazzling landscapes of Claude and Poussin, in which shepherds and sailors from antique ships meander under incongruous elms. Harmonies of light and colour, drip of water over fern; they inculcate in those who stay long in the Midi, and whose brains are addled by iodine, a habit of moralising, a brooding about causes. What makes men divide up into nations and go to war? Why do they live in cities? And what is the true relationship between Nature and Man?

The beaches of the Maures are of white sand, wide, with a ribbon of umbrella pines, below which juicy mesembrianthemum and dry flowers of the sand stretch to within a yard of the sea. Lying there amid the pacific blues and greens the eyes open and shut on the white surface: the vague blurred philosophising continues. Animism, pantheism, images of the earth soaring through space with the swerve of a ping-pong ball circulate in the head, the woolly brain meddles with ethics. No more power, no aggression, no intolerance. All must be free. When, whizz, a disturbance. Under the eye the soil is pitted into a conical depression, about the size of a candle

extinguisher, down whose walls the sand trickles gently, moved by a suspicion of wind. Whizz, and a clot is hurled to the top again, the bottom of the funnel cleared, in disobedience to the natural law. As it silts up it is cleared by another whirr, and there appears, at the nadir of the cone, a brown pair of curved earwig horns, antlers of a giant earwig that churn the sand upwards like a steam shovel.

Now an ant is traversing the dangerous arrête. He sidles, slithers, and goes fumbling down the Wall of Death to the waiting chopper. Snap! He struggles up, mounting the steep banking grain by grain as it shelves beneath him, till a new eruption is engineered by his waiting enemy. Sand belches out, the avalanche engulfs him, the horny sickles contract and disappear with their beady victim under the whiteness. Mystery, frustration, tragedy, death are then at large in this peaceful wilderness. Can the aggressive instinct be analysed out of those clippers? Or it's lethal headpiece be removed by a more equitable distribution of raw materials? The funnels, I observe, are all round me. The sand is pock-marked with these geometrical death-traps, engineering triumphs of insect art. And this horsefly might be used for an experiment. I shove it downwards. The Claws seize on a wing, and the struggle is on. The fight proceeds like an atrocity of chemical warfare. The great fly threshes the soil with its wings, it buzzes and drones while the sand heaves round it's propellers and the facets of its giant projectors glitter with light. But the clippers do not relax, and disappear tugging the fly beneath the surface. The threshing continues, a faint buzzing comes from the invisible horsefly, and it's undercarriage appears, with legs waving. Will it take off? The wings of the insect bomber pound the air, the fly starts forward and upwards, and hauls after it—o fiend, embodiment of evil! A creature whose clippers are joined to a muscle-bound thorax and a vile yellow armour-plated body, squat and powerful, with a beetle set of legs to manœuvre this engine of destruction. The Tank with a Mind now scuttles backwards in reverse, the stern,

then the legs disappear, then the jaws which drag its prey. Legs beat the ground. A fainter wheeze and whirr, no hope now, the last wing tip vanished, the air colder, the pines greener, the cone empty except for the trickle, the sifting and silting down the funnel of the grains of pearl coloured sand.

Nature arranged this; gave the Ant-Lion it's dredging skill and it's cannon-ball service. How can it tell, buried except for the striking choppers, that the pebble which rolls down has to be volleyed out of the death trap, while the approaching ant must be collected by gentle eruptions, dismayed by a perpetual sandy shower? And answer as usual, we do not know.

Yet the relationship between the Ant-Lion and the curving beaches of Pampelone suggests a parallel. This time at Albi. Here Art and Nature have formed one of the most harmonious scenes in Europe. The fortress cathedral, the bishop's palace with its hanging gardens, and the old bridge, all of ancient brick, blend into the tawny landscape through which the emancipated Tarn flows from it's gorges to the Garonne. Here again one wanders through this dream of the Middle Ages, by precincts of the rosy cathedral where the pious buzz like cockroaches, to be brought up by a notice on the portcullis of the Bishop's Palace. 'Musée Toulouse-Lautrec.' Tucked in the conventional Gothic of the fortress is a suite of long rooms in which the mother of the artist, using all her feudal powers, forced the municipal authorities to hang the pictures of her son. Less fortunate than those of Aix, who refused Cezanne's request to leave his pictures to the city, they were intimidated by the Countess into placing them in this most sacred corner, lighted and hung in salons whose decoration has concealed all traces of the unsightly past.

The concierge turns proudly to the Early Work—pastoral scenes and sentimental evocations of Millet—these he likes best, they are what the Count was doing before he left his home and was corrupted by the Capital. Then come the drawings, in which emerges the fine savage

line of the mature artist, that bold, but not (as in some of the paintings) vulgar stroke, which hits off the brutality of his subjects, or the beauty of those young girls doomed to such an inevitable end. In the large room beyond are the paintings, a morgue of End of Century vice, a succession of canvases in which there is hardly daylight, and where the only creature who lives by day is the wizened little Irish jockey. The world of the hunchback Count is nocturnal, gas-lit, racy, depraved and vicious; the shocked Albigeois who pass through the gallery are rivetted by the extraordinary picture of the laundress who checks over with the *sous-maitresse* the linen from her Maison. As one goes from picture to picture the atmosphere intensifies, Valentin le Désossé and La Goulue become familiars, and the lovely girls blur into the dark of the Moulin Rouge, where one distinguishes a favourite figure, the long sad nocturnal, utterly empty but doggedly boring face of 'L'Anglais,' some English habitué to whom constant all night attendance has given the polish of a sentry at his post.

At the end of the gallery is a door before which the concierge smiles mysteriously, as if to prepare us for Pompeian revelations. He opens it, and we emerge on a small terrace. The sun is shining, the sky is blue, the Tarn ripples underneath. Beyond the ancient brick of the bishop's citadel and the arches of the bridge stretches the landscape of the Albigeois, foothills of green corn delicately crowned by pink hill villages, which merge into the brown of the distant Cevennes under the pale penetrating light of the near-south, the transitional-Mediterranean. A lovely and healthy prospect, in which fields and cities of men blend everywhere into the earth and the sunshine. One takes a deep breath, when obstinately, from behind the closed door, one feels a suction; attraction fights repulsion as in the cold wavering opposition between the like poles of a magnet. Deep in his lair the Ant-Lion is at work; the hunchback Count recalls us; the world of poverty, greed, bad air, consumption, and of those who never go to bed awaits, but there awaits also an artist's integration

of it, a world in which all trace of sentiment or decadence is excluded by the realism of the painter, and the vitality of his line. In the sunlight on the terrace we are given the choice between the world of Nature and the world of Art. Nature seems to win, but at the moment of victory there is something lacking, and it is that lack which only the unnatural world inside can supply—progress, for example, for the view from the Palace has not altered, except slightly to deteriorate, for several hundred years. The enjoyment of it requires no more perception than had Erasmus, while the art of Lautrec is modern, and can only be appreciated by those who combine a certain kind of aristocratic satisfaction at human beings acting in character, and in gross character, with the love of fine drawing and colour.

Not that Lautrec was a great artist, he is to Degas what Maupassant is to Flaubert, one who extended the noble conception of realism by which a great master accepts the world as it is for the sake of its dynamism, and for the passive, extraordinarily responsive quality of that world to the artist who has learnt how to impose his will on it. The world of Lautrec is artificial because it excludes goodness and beauty as carefully as it excludes the sun. But it is an arranged world, a world of melancholy and ignorance, (figures melancholy because ignorant, patient in the treadmill of pleasure), and so the artist compels us from the terrace, because force and intelligence dominate that arrangement. And once back, we are back in his dream, in a hunchback's dream of the world; the sunlight seems tawdry, the red brick vulgar, the palace ornate, his crowd who stand in their tall hats gaping at the well-seasoned Can-Can dancers are in the only place worth being.

Now I understand the Ant-Lion. It is in Nature and with a natural right to its existence. There is no contrast between them, it is an advanced gadget in the scheme which includes the peaceful hills and the beach with its reedy pools of brackish water. Nor is there any contrast between Lautrec and the landscape of Albi. Albi was the oyster, and the contents of the museum are the

Pearl. The irritant? The action of a physical deformity on an aristocratic, artistic but unoriginal mind which was happiest in the company of its inferiors, and which liked to be surrounded by the opposite sex in places where the deformity could be concealed by potency, or by the distribution of money. The result, a highly specialised painter, one of nature's very latest experiments. And even that peaceful landscape was home in the Middle Ages of that subversive doctrine, the Albigensian heresy; a primitive anarchism which taught that men were equal and free, which disbelieved in violence and believed in a chosen priesthood, in the Cathari who attained purity by abstinence, while they encouraged the Count's royal ancestors to come through excess and indulgence out on the other side. It was they, who believed that the human race should cease to procreate, and so solve the problem of evil, who were massacred at Muret and Lavaur, and whom Simon de Montfort slaughtered with the remark 'The Lord will know his own.' And the Heretics were right. Had a revolt against procreation spread outwards from Albi the world would have become an empty place, nor would such obstinate human beings who survived have been driven to kill each other for living-room, victims, for all we may know, of some deeper instinct of self-destruction which bids them make way for a new experiment, the civilisation of the termite or the rat.

Much has happened since the summer. To-day the Maures are out of bounds, the Museum closed, and many generalisations based on incorrect assessment of the facts fallen to pieces, but, (since the operations of the Ant-Lion have now been extended), it seems worth while to recall that the statements on the life of pleasure which Lautrec took from his witnesses at the Tabarin and the Moulin de la Galette, and which he so vigorously recorded on canvas, are still available to the traveller of the future, and assert their truth.

H. E. BATES

THE BRIDGE

I

The summer my father died my sister and I decided to start a guest-house together. Of course we were fools, but I think we both thought it time to make something of the too-large red-brick family house where for so long there had been no family. Mother had been dead six years. Now, for the first time, we were feeling our independence.

All through that summer the weather was lovely. My father had died in March, and we spent the whole of May, June and July replanning and redecorating the house, putting in new baths, central heating, even a second staircase. We hoped to be ready by August, and all through these weeks of clear dry weather we had every window open and there was that fine exhilarating smell of new paint and new wood in every corner of the house. My father had been a country solicitor of a solid and careful type who felt tradition to be of supreme importance in life. For that reason the disappointment of having two daughters had shaken him greatly, and although he had borne with my sister, who is older than I by seven years, he had never really been able to bear with me. I have always done my best to understand this and not bear him any ill-will because of it. He wanted sons to follow him in a profession where sons had followed for five generations, and to have had tradition broken by a girl who grew up to be a little irresponsible, rather self-centred and highly impracticable, was a shock from which he never properly recovered. He took a sort of revenge on me, whether by conscious or unconscious means I could never tell, by showing a certain partiality towards my sister. I was hurt by this partiality, but I have since tried to understand it too. What I can't

understand is why my father did not make the most revolutionary possible break with tradition and take my sister into the solicitor's profession with him. Dora would have made an admirable solicitor. She is utterly practical, resourceful, conscientious and in a way very ingenious. Her straight brown hair is and always has been parted directly in the middle: so straight and accurate and unchanging that it gives the feeling of being the result of a positive and ingenious mathematical calculation. Her clear, rather white-skinned face has something of the same surely defined, uninspired character as a careful copper-plate hand in a ledger.

I do not know quite what gave us this idea of a guest-house. Parkinford is just a small pleasant country town, with a thirteenth-century church and a row of almshouses and a tiny square surrounded by sycamore-trees; the river flows past one end of the town, under a stone hump-backed bridge past irregular clumps of weeping willow that hang down like disentangled water-weed, brushing the water with their pale green branches in spring and summer. There was a time when I thought it a very dull town. Then I went away from it and—but I shall come to all that in a moment. All I wish to say now is that apart from the public-houses and a temperance commercial hotel down by the station we suddenly realised that our guest-house would be the only place where a certain class of tourist could get a room for the night. The fact that there were very few tourists who wanted to stop a night in Parkinford didn't discourage us; my sister quite rightly reasoned that it was our business to attract tourists. In time we should build up a reputation. Among other things my sister is a beautiful cook. She turns out tarts and pies and a great variety of dishes with the same ease and precise, mathematical beauty as she manipulates figures. I cannot cook at all, I haven't the slightest interest in mathematics, but I was young and, that first summer of the new boarding-house, I had no doubts about my own beauty. I had very thick deeply waved blonde hair and clear blue eyes. I was full too of that deep

emotional energy that springs naturally with youthful beauty—my heart full of it and hurting and not knowing where to direct itself. There is a snapshot taken of me just about this time: it shows me in a short white dress standing in front of a large lime-tree at the back of the house. You can see in this picture a young, eager looking girl with a smile on her face; but what you cannot see or hear or feel are the millions of delicate blossoms on the lime, the surge of bees in them and the scented honey-dew falling on my hair and on my hands and on the brown summer grass. What this photograph does not show is the dreaming, urgent creature behind the gaiety and the beauty. It does not show how that young girl of twenty-two felt, dreaming and in love with herself and rather foolishly conscious of having a soul.

We opened the guest-house at last in the middle of August, and we started off immediately with two guests. One was a Mr. Bernard Parker, who had been my father's clerk for twenty years and had lived in disgraceful back-room lodgings most of the time and had never married; the other was a Miss Millay, librarian at the public library, a studious sort of girl who had been friendly with my sister for many years. These would form the permanent background for casual tourists, for which of course it was really too late that year.

Then, no sooner had we opened, than we had a considerable shock. It was announced in the papers, and soon everyone was talking about it, that a new by-pass was to be constructed immediately on the south side, the river side, of Parkinford. This would not only cut out the old hump-backed bridge, but by means of a great new concrete bridge would span the river, the railway-line and the meadows that were almost always flooded in winter. It was a project that had been talked of for years and the realisation of which had been almost abandoned. Everyone was now very jubilant about it. It was only we who had reason to hate the thought of it. We felt that nothing could have smashed so completely our hopes of tourists and our hope for the

future. My sister, less emotional than I, more balanced and more resourceful, took it with a sort of logical stoicism, but from the first I made up my mind I hated that bridge.

The project of the new bridge had been announced about a month and preliminary work had already begun across the meadows by the river and the railway-line when something else happened. I had been down into the town shopping one evening and I came back about seven o'clock to find my sister talking to a young man in what we called the reception room. He had two large leather suit-cases with him and I knew, even before my sister spoke, that we had another guest.

"Oh! there you are, Linda," my sister said. "May I introduce Mr. Lawrence? Mr. Lawrence is coming to stay with us."

"Oh!" I said. "For long?"

"Well, for quite a time, I think," he said. "I've a job in the town that'll keep me busy for about eighteen months."

"Oh! Good," I said.

He looked at me and smiled. It was a curious smile. It gave me the strangest sort of feeling: the feeling that I had been singled out to receive it. There are some people who smile with the eyes, hardly moving the lips; others who show their teeth and keep the eyes immovable. This smile came from the slightest quiver of a mouth that did not open. I did not see it then, but it was a weak mouth. It was handsome and impertinent and it seemed to me to have all sorts of subtle and compelling qualities that were not analysable at a first glance, but you could see without thinking that it was vain and passionate and in a way sensitive too. I knew that I was right about the vanity. You could see that by the way he dressed: the smart grey suit, the brown suède shoes, the silk wine-red tie, the soft green Homburg hat. Oh! yes, you could see that he felt himself to be somebody that was somebody.

Instantly I didn't like him. I said something about I hoped he would be comfortable and he said "I hope so," almost mocking; and then my sister said she would show

him to his room. He insisted on carrying his bags upstairs and in walking behind my sister. I must say that the back view of him was even more impressive than the front. It was curious how you got a feeling of jauntiness and class and vanity from the smooth cut of that grey suit and the even smoother sweep of his very black, oiled hair. It was curious how repellent and attractive it was.

My sister came down again in two or three minutes, and she said at once, "Well, what do you think?"

"Well, he certainly doesn't undervalue himself," I said.

"Linda," she said, "I think it ought to be our first rule not to criticise guests. We've set out to make a business proposition of this place, and personalities have got to be kept out." That was just like Dora: sound and practical and admirably logical. "The main point is whether he pays his bill. In any case it's a very good let—eighteen months. It will do something to compensate us for that wretched bridge."

"I only hope we're good enough for him," I said.

"Well, if you want my opinion," she said, "I think he's perfectly all right."

"You didn't ask him what his job was?" I said.

"No, I didn't. That's something else we ought to avoid. Inquisitiveness. We'll find out soon enough what his job is."

My sister was quite right. We did find out. Every morning, before breakfast, we had our separate jobs to do. Dora cooked breakfast and took up early morning tea to the guests; I prepared the tables and tidied the dining room. We had only one servant, Elsie, and she would be busy stoking the boiler-fire and sweeping the hall and stairs. One of my jobs was to take in the morning papers and the post. The second morning I was surprised to see the size of Mr. Lawrence's correspondence: a dozen or more letters, one registered, and several large flat packages. One of these packages was marked *Ministry of Transport: Urgent*, and then I knew who and what he was.

Soon, of course, everyone knew what I knew. Everyone knew Mr. Lawrence, the government engineer in charge of

the new bridge. And everyone, including even my sister, seemed quite honoured by the presence in Parkinford of a government engineer. In fact the instant reaction in Parkinford was a sort of emotional dog-fight—half the women became at once raving jealous over him. Even Elsie and Miss Millay were jealous.

My own instant reaction was quite simple. I hated him. At twenty-two it is possible to hate some person or object or creed with a peculiarly pure, straightforward hatred, and to gain some kind of inverse pleasure from that hatred. This is how it was with J. Eric Lawrence and I. You will notice this J. Eric Lawrence—that's how he always styled himself: just that extra initial that put him a little above other men. I hated him more out of deliberation than out of any genuine feeling of revulsion. I cheated myself into thinking I hated him because more than anything he stood for the conception of the new bridge. He stood for something new and aloof and outside us and I took great pleasure in hating that something, whatever it was, tremendously. I also got a special feeling of pleasure out of behaving perversely. If J. Eric Lawrence was nice to me, as he could be so easily and often was, I took great pleasure in being despicably rude and aggravating towards him. I took great pains to be contemptuous of his precious bridge, although it did not begin to take shape until the following spring. Above all I was disappointed whenever he was not there, as I had hoped, to offer himself for one of my attacks. The strange thing was that he did not mind my hatred. He accepted it with a kind of amused amiability. He accepted it with that smile of his: that very handsome, vain and important smile, with its flicker of impertinence.

There isn't much doubt, I think, that all this would have worn off gradually; this childish, mechanised hatred certainly couldn't have gone on for ever. But after J. Eric Lawrence had been with us about two months something else happened.

I began to notice a remarkable change in my sister.

II

From the first my sister had accepted J. Eric Lawrence with a sort of frank, business-like cordiality. It was very natural that they had a great deal in common. My sister, with her mathematical, resourceful mind, could understand and be interested in and even become enthusiastic about an engineering project like a bridge. To some people arithmetic is, I suppose, a form of music, and the calculation and planning and creation of that bridge must have had the quality of music to J. Eric Lawrence. And gradually and quite naturally my sister began to take an interest in that music. It began to have the deepest and most disturbing and most beautiful effect on her mind.

It was very strange how I first noticed this. My sister has never been given to very easy self-expression. Any other girl would have begun to express reactions of love and happiness as soon as the cause of them became clear to her. But my sister is abnormally passive. She is capable of feeling but not of demonstrating any great emotion: so that it is easy for anyone who does not know her to conclude that she is almost incapable of feeling emotion at all. Also she takes after my father, who was a negative, unattractive man with colourless, bony features. She has the trim, practical appearance of a cloth-bound book. In consequence she has no means of expressing by physical beauty any great depth of emotion, however beautiful it is in itself. It is beyond her to fall in love actively. Her way would be to fall in love with dismal passivity, quietly, tragically, out of sight.

There are women who would have found another quite simple way of expressing their feelings, but my sister could not even do that. She could not even cook her way to J. Eric Lawrence's heart. She was too practical for that. All our guests, unless they asked specially, ate the same food. It was against all my sister's principles to make an exception even of J. Eric Lawrence—yet one of her special smoked salmon omelettes, which were delicious and which

she only turned out on rare occasions, must have shown him that she had some positive, individual feeling for him. But she couldn't even do that.

No; my sister's way of showing that she was in love with J. Eric Lawrence was to go for a walk every evening. That was an old habit of hers: a walk into the town to post some letters, or as far as the common, or down to the public library to meet Miss Millay. She had always varied her route. But now it became obvious that her walk every evening was in the same direction and to the same place. She went down to J. Eric Lawrence's bridge.

It did not strike me until later how odd it was that for me the bridge was a means of hatred, whereas for my sister it was exactly the opposite. It was odd how that inanimate and at that time almost non-existent object—there was very little to be seen except huge piles of timber, iron and concrete lying about the meadows—should have affected our lives so much. Of course we were fools. There was I cheating myself into hating the man because I hated the bridge; and there was my sister, too inhibited and passive to express her love, going out every night, wet or fine, to gaze on a pile of raw materials lying in a field and a line of red signal lamps where the road had begun. Can you imagine anything sillier than that?

Perhaps that is what made me so angry. It all seemed so silly and irrational and pointless. It was Miss Millay who first told us about it. "Dora always used to meet me out of the library two nights a week," she said. "Now she never does. I can't understand it." I couldn't understand it either. Then gradually we found out where she was going, and I began to understand.

Without waiting to think it over, I felt terribly angry. Although I had never been directly angry with J. Eric Lawrence I felt my antagonism suddenly shift from him towards my sister. I found all sorts of reasons for my feelings. There is nothing a woman dislikes more than to see another woman running after a man, and it seemed to me that this was what my sister was doing. Another

thing, it seemed cheap; it also seemed very clumsy and, in such a calm, rational person as my sister, very absurd and very childish. No: it did not once occur to me that perhaps she was deeply, terribly, mortally unhappy.

Then I began to notice something else. My sister began to display the strangest and most comprehensive knowledge of bridge construction. It was winter now, and sometimes J. Eric Lawrence spent the evening playing chess with Mr. Parker in the drawing-room. One evening I went into the room just in time to hear my sister say:

"Isn't the chief object of steel in reinforced concrete to resist tensile stresses?"

"Yes, that's right," he said.

"And the concrete, I suppose, offers resistance to compression?"

"That's it," he said, and smiled a little: the old, handsome smile with its captivating impertinence.

I was staggered to hear my sister talk like this. To me a bridge was a bridge; it had never occurred to me that there was a science of bridge-making, and when my sister began to use terms like the theory of the resolution of forces, elastic deformation, the neutral axis and the relationship of stress to strain I saw that I was listening to a new form of love-attraction. She was trying to express her love for J. Eric Lawrence by her knowledge of something dear to him, by her brains and her ingenuity. There was something pathetic and absurd about it, and again I was strangely angry.

For a time J. Eric Lawrence was very interested in this talk of my sister's. He was very clever, naturally, very clever: he had once said that even as a boy he ate and slept and dreamed mathematics. I could well believe it. But a passion for mathematics is not inexhaustible, and a woman who elects to talk of tensile stresses has only herself to blame if after a time she becomes very boring. And gradually, that night, I saw J. Eric Lawrence becoming more and more bored by the dry, desperate, mathematical mind of my sister.

All this time I had been sitting by the fire, not saying anything. I could see his face. It was the sort of restless, sensuous, self-indulgent face that needs and is always looking for an emotionally responsive face of its own kind. A large part of the mind behind it had no interest in tensile stresses; it was bored by all thought of such things as weight of steel in superstructure. It depended for its existence on emotion, warmth, excitable beauty. I saw him look at the clock, down at his hands, at the chess-board. Yes, he was bored, bored by the talk, the game, insufferably bored above all by my sister, and I felt glad about it. Then suddenly he looked up at me. It seemed just a repetition of an habitual look, quick, attractive, rather impertinent. But now there was something else about it too. It had a kind of confidential softness in it—but I had not time to analyse it or do anything before he hurriedly got up from the chess-board.

"I knew there was something I'd forgotten," he said. "I knew there was something. I'd meant to see Garbo in that film at the Ritz, and to-night is the only possible night I can go. I knew there was something."

He looked at my sister. Of course it was a weak excuse. He must have known that she never went to the cinema. She had always kept away on principle: thought it rather silly. He must have known that. Yet he said "How about coming too?"

"Me?" she said. "Oh! no." Her face began to colour deeply. "Oh! no, no thanks, I never go. I'd rather not."

He looked at me.

"What about you, Linda? You'll come, won't you?"

I got up. "Yes," I said. I spoke without thinking. "Yes. I love Garbo."

"Good," he said. "How many hours will it take you to get ready?"

"Two minutes," I said. "I just have to run upstairs."

"All right, I'll get my coat," he said.

I went upstairs and he went into the cloakroom to get his coat. After two or three minutes I came down again, and at the same moment he came out of the cloakroom.

"Ready?" he said.

"I'll just say good-night to Dora," I said. "In case we're late."

Opening the drawing-room door, I began to say "I'll just say good-night, Dora, just in case——" when I saw that Mr. Parker was sitting there alone. "Oh! where's Dora?" I said.

"I think she went out for her walk," he said.

I did not say anything. But as I went out into the darkness with J. Eric Lawrence I felt a rush of jealousy, hatred and triumph combine in an intolerable feeling of excitement in my heart.

At precisely that moment there began a new antagonism against my sister.

III

All that winter the building of the bridge, of course, went on; and all that winter the feeling of antagonism against my sister deepened and got stronger. The two structures were gradually built up together.

The construction of a bridge is a slow process; similarly the building up of a certain state of emotion, like deep affection or revenge, needs time. My early feeling of hatred towards J. Eric Lawrence was superficial; I did not know him then. Yes, it was superficial, and it might have gone on being superficial if it had not been for my sister. If my sister had not fallen in love with him I might not have acted as I did. For the plain fact is that all that winter, and on into the next spring, I set myself to fall in love with J. Eric Lawrence purposely, simply in order to spite my sister.

I have already said that my father had always shown great partiality towards my sister, and had seemed to take an unconscious or conscious revenge on me. It may be that this lay behind what I felt or did. I don't know. I only know that I took a despicable delight in doing what I did—in taking J. Eric Lawrence away from her, in appealing to the side of his nature that was foreign to her, in throwing

at him all my youthful, excitable beauty and greatly rejoicing in it.

All this did not happen suddenly. It was accomplished slowly, by little things—things like visits to the movies together, glances, a dance or two, by our coming into the dark quiet house very late at night, I in a flimsy dress with bare arms, and both of us warm and excited, and once by the snow lying in light soft flakes on my fur coat and on my gloves and my hair and he standing in the lighted hall and telling me how much I looked like something off a Christmas tree, in just the flattering, sentimental way that a young girl would love, whether she admitted it or not.

Yet all that winter there was no feeling of permanence about what was happening. I had the feeling first of not giving the best part of myself, then of not trusting him. At the first opportunity I felt he would drop me and run. All the time I felt I wanted something much more secure and beautiful.

It wasn't until the next summer that anything important happened. Then one evening J. Eric Lawrence and I were walking round the garden. For some reason or other we stopped under the lime-tree. I have already spoken about this lime-tree. It was quite large and must have been fairly old, and it overshadowed completely the west side of the house. Already that summer the grass had stopped growing underneath it and already in the warm early June evening it was possible to breathe the almost intolerably sweet scent of the first lime-flowers.

We stood underneath the tree and then J. Eric Lawrence suddenly began to say something about the roots of such a large tree must be having a damaging effect on the foundations of the house. "You ought to do something about it," he said.

"What could we do?" I said.

"Well, if it were mine," he said, "I should have it down."

At that moment I turned and saw my sister coming along the path from the house. That was rather her way: coming

upon us suddenly, as if she couldn't leave us alone together. The evening was very clear and calm, and she must have heard what J. Eric Lawrence had said.

"So you want to cut down the lime-tree, Mr. Lawrence?" she said.

"Well, I'm only speaking from a practical point of view," he said.

"But why?"

"It probably keeps the house damper than it should be," he said, "and it certainly shuts out light and air. And I should think it adversely affects the foundations."

Well, that was practical enough—just the sort of practical, sober reasoning that ought normally to have appealed to my sister. But she wouldn't have it. She suddenly showed that she had an enormous sentimental attachment to that tree. She flushed hotly and said:

"You may want it down but I don't. I don't, and I never shall!"

"I think Mr. Lawrence is right," I said.

I spoke quickly. The reaction was instinctive. If I had thought a moment I should have realised how much I myself loved that tree, which with its first long olive-green leaves, the honey-fragrant blossom and the masses of claret-coloured branches in winter was the most beautiful thing in our over-grown, neglected garden. Yes, it was a beautiful thing, but suddenly I wanted it down. I wanted to be against my sister; I wanted to show her that J. Eric Lawrence and I were on one side and she on another. I wanted to be able to revel in an aggravated sense of triumphant superiority.

"After all," I said, "the tree is no good to us."

"All the same, I love it and I'd rather die," she said, "than have it down."

"Well, there's no need to come over all sentimental about it."

"Perhaps I am sentimental," she said.

"Perhaps!" I said. "Just hark at her," I said to J. Eric Lawrence. "She must think we're a pretty hard-bitten pair."

"I don't think anything," she said. "I'm only saying what I feel."

"All right," I said, "you're not obliged to cry over it."

That was a bitter thing to say and she did not answer it. Instead she turned and walked back into the house. In that moment, as I now see it, a break was made between us: she on one side, J. Eric Lawrence and I on the other. When she had gone it seemed suddenly very silent. It was growing dark and the leaves of the lime-tree were wonderfully still. By the trunk of the tree there was an old iron seat and we sat down on it. For some time we sat without saying anything. There are evenings in summer when it never grows cool and the nectar keeps rising in all the flowers in the warm darkness, until the darkness itself is inexpressibly deep with scent. You feel it would be good to sit there all night long and it was like that as we sat there under the lime-tree. My mind, young and excitable and at its best deeply sensitive, suddenly took a new direction. I felt very moved by the evening, the silence, the strange atmosphere of protectiveness given out by the lime-tree spreading itself above me.

We sat there for a long time. The lights in the house began to go out, and when the last one had completed the darkness J. Eric Lawrence turned to me and asked whose it was and I said it was my sister's.

"Is your room on the other side?" he said.

"Yes," I said. I had made up my mind what I wanted now. "You know it's just at the top of the new staircase," I said, "where it comes up from the kitchen."

IV

He began to come to my room very often that summer and autumn, using the second staircase, until the bridge was finished. I don't know if my sister knew about it. She may have done; she may not. She knew that he was in the habit of working very late at night, at correspondence and plans and such things, and it is possible that she never suspected.

The odd thing is that I was not afraid of her knowing.

On the contrary I was afraid of her not knowing. I wanted her to know. I wanted to confront her with the whole thing, to show her that what I felt for J. Eric Lawrence was something more real and more exciting and splendid than anything she could feel on that solitary nightly walk of hers down to the bridge. How often she walked down to that bridge I don't know. I cannot begin to think what she felt for it, unless it was that in her level-headed, practical way she could never let herself fall in love with a person directly, but only with something symbolic of that person, like J. Eric Lawrence's bridge. I only know that she was in love with him, very deeply, very passively, at a distance, a sort of love by remote control, and I only knew that later.

Then, in October that year, my sister had a great shock. She could not have been more greatly shocked if she had walked into my room one night and found J. Eric Lawrence there.

One morning, when she took J. Eric Lawrence's coffee and eggs into the dining-room, she found Mr. Parker and Miss Millay shaking him enthusiastically by the hand.

"Why," she said, "is it a birthday or something?"

"No," Miss Millay said, very excited, "it's better than that. Better than that. It's the bridge. The bridge."

"The bridge?" my sister said.

"Yes!" Miss Millay said, "it's to be opened on November the fifteenth."

"The fifteenth?" my sister said. "But that's only three weeks away."

"Nevertheless," Mr. Parker said, "that's the date."

My sister looked at J. Eric Lawrence. "But it was to take eighteen months," she said. "It's hardly been fifteen."

"We had special orders from the Ministry some weeks ago to get a move on," he said. "We're anxious to get the new road open before there's any chance of flooding on the old one. I'm told it floods very easily down there."

"Then it means you'll soon be going?" my sister said.

"Yes, soon be going now," he said.

It was Miss Millay who told me how my sister reacted to that simple and, as it seemed, purposely abrupt statement. She went deathly white. There are women who would have rushed out of the room, made a demonstration. But there was only one demonstration my sister could make. It was the simple demonstration that she was terribly sick at heart.

I do not suppose J. Eric Lawrence noticed anything. That would be like him. Nor was I upset by the news that the bridge would soon be finished and that by the beginning of December J. Eric Lawrence would have gone away. My reason for not being upset was quite simple. I was determined that if he went away I should go with him.

That night I made him promise that. For him, as I see it now, it must have been a very simple thing to promise. I was very young, very excitable and in a dangerously credulous state of mind. In the darkness of the bedroom I could not of course see his face. All I wanted was a simple answer. All he had to say was "Yes, you can come with me," and that, of course, is exactly what he did say.

It was the next day when I realised that there was just one thing more that I wanted.

"If we're going away we ought to tell Dora," I said.

"Must we? It's four or five weeks yet."

"We ought to tell her," I said. "I want to tell her."

"Now?"

"As soon as possible."

"Look," he said. He smiled at me in the old, completely captivating way. "Let's wait until the bridge is finished. Won't that do?"

"All right," I said.

So we waited until the bridge was finished; and until the day the bridge was opened I went about with what must have been an impossibly conceited air of only partially disguised triumph. But it was nothing to the triumph that I saw on my sister's face when she stood with the privileged spectators on the bridge that soft clear November afternoon, with the dead leaves of the neighbouring willow-trees blowing idly along the new white concrete, over the new

stone parapets and falling lightly on to the grass, on the railway track and on the clear water of the river below. There were many people there and they cheered loudly as the Minister of Transport, accompanied by a large group of important townsmen, cut the tape and made the usual joke about paying for the scissors and then shook hands with J. Eric Lawrence. The triumph on my sister's face was at that moment complete. It was wonderfully characteristic: passive, but deep; quite strong, but beautifully unselfish and secure. The most wonderful thing about it was that it lacked all direction; it was not a triumph against anyone. Only my sister can tell what she felt, of course, high up on that shining white bridge in the clear golden November air, but it seemed to me as if she might have regarded the bridge as her own spiritual triumph.

As soon as the bridge was opened the traffic began to drive over it, and shortly afterwards the Minister of Transport and the officials drove back to London, and then my sister, J. Eric Lawrence and I drove slowly home through the town. It had been a tense day for all of us and we did not speak much. My sister was too shy and too passive even to congratulate J. Eric Lawrence on his achievement, but all the time I knew she was still nursing that deep, private sense of triumph.

I too was nursing something, and I knew that I could not keep it much longer. My sister had had her triumph. Now it was my turn. And that evening, just before Miss Millay and Mr. Parker came down to supper, and when there were only the three of us in the sitting-room, my sister smiled at J. Eric Lawrence and said she supposed it was only a question of time now before he packed his bags?

"You mean our bags," I said.

My sister did not speak. Her mouth was open a little, and I remember thinking how foolish, unreliable and vacantly frightened she looked.

"You must have known," I said, looking straight at her. I had waited so long for that particular moment that now there seemed nothing in it. The tragic surprised vacancy in

my sister's face made everything else seem sterile.

"You must have known," I said. "Now the bridge is finished we're going away together."

My sister did not speak. Her face was now very white. I had no more to say either. A fortnight later J. Eric Lawrence left for London. I was to follow him four days later and meet him at the Park Hotel.

V

It is now summer again and I am back in Parkinford. The summer has been a good one and, contrary to all our early fears, the bridge and the by-pass have made no difference to business with us. We have been very busy all summer and by evening, by eight or nine o'clock, after supper is over, we are both tired out. My sister does not go for her walk now, and I do not go out either. I have got into the habit of sitting in what used to be my father's study. It used to be a very dark, gloomy little room but it is very light now. The reason for this is that my sister has had all the branches of the lime-tree cut off, leaving the trunk stark and bare, so that now there is nothing to shut out the light.

But this is not what I am trying to say, and perhaps it would be better if I came to the point. I have never been a very practical person and the truth is that there are things about J. Eric Lawrence that I should have found out but which, because I was young and romantic and excitable, I did not trouble about. But then my sister, who is so extremely practical and far-sighted and realistic, did not trouble about them either. Of course we were fools, and it did not occur to either of us that J. Eric Lawrence was a married man who had for some years not lived with his wife. Even now my sister does not know that. She does not know that I went to the Park Hotel and found a letter telling me, in the most charming and persuasive terms of course, that simple and final fact, without giving an address to which I could send an answer. No, she does not know that, and if there is any question of triumph now it lies with

her. She knows that my love-affair with J. Eric Lawrence is over. She knows that he will never come back of course, but there must always be for her the secret and perhaps exciting hope that one day he might drop in for tea, stay on to supper, and talk once again of bridges and tensile stresses and smile at us in the old charming, self-indulgent, impertinent way and proceed to captivate us all completely.

Of course he won't come. I know that. We were both fools. The strange thing is that I do not hold him responsible. I am responsible. If it had not been for that recurrent and inexplicable feeling of antagonism towards my sister it would never have happened. My sister would have fallen in love with him in her own way, with unspoken passivity, and when he went away she would have locked it all away very nicely in her heart. For a time she would have brooded over it, squeezed from it a few drops of miserable, solitary pleasure, and then probably after a time have got over it.

The point is that it is not all over. J. Eric Lawrence has gone, the bridge has long since become an unnoticed part of our everyday life, the beauty and excitement and trouble of last summer are things of the past, but the antagonism remains.

It is, however, not only that. There is still something else. It might be possible to do something about the antagonism itself, but now something else has happened in this house where for so many years nothing ever happened at all.

We have another permanent guest. He is a youngish man named Barnes, and he has just been transferred to one of the banks here. He is a very pleasant, courteous fair-haired man who could not cherish a moment's antagonism against a soul. He is gentle without being at all docile. He rushes to open doors for us, and moves with discretion when he comes in late at night from the bank. He plays the piano rather well, and you get the impression when he plays that the hammers are muffled with wool. There is nothing impertinent or passionate or vain about him, he could

never build a bridge over a river, but it seems to me that he is the sort of person in whom you could confide an enormous amount of trouble. He listens with the gravest attention to all you say, and it is obvious he would not hurt a soul. He is like a well-made cushion on which you could rest your head.

And that is exactly how I feel. After the bitterness and shock and tumultuous emotion of the affair with J. Eric Lawrence I feel that I should like to rest. I should like to rest for a long time. I should like to find someone in whom I could confide and who will never think of hurting me—someone who will be decent to me for the rest of my life.

It is the simplest, most natural desire in the world, and yet I am immensely frightened of it. And I am frightened of it because my sister has begun to think exactly as I do. She is also thinking of Mr. Barnes. There is something in her quiet, passive nature which would appeal enormously to a man like him, and it is easy to see that in a very prosaic, very inglorious sort of way he could fall in love with her.

I am at the moment sitting in my father's former study, looking out of the window. In my absence last winter, as I said, my sister lopped the branches of the lime-tree. A few fresh twigs, now a deep claret colour, have shot out from the trunk, but there are no flowers this year and what was once a large, dark graceful tree now looks hateful. You would not believe what a difference it makes. You see things you could never see before, and there is light everywhere.

Downstairs in the drawing-room Mr. Barnes is very softly playing the piano. I have been listening to him, but I cannot tell exactly what it is he is playing. It is something very soothing and subdued, in a minor key, and I have no doubt that somewhere in the house my sister is listening too.

It is almost dark and I have been looking and listening for a long time. The bridge has been built. I have been away and have come back again. My sister has lopped the branches of the lime-tree and now in the house there is the sound of this gentle Mr. Barnes playing the piano. Things have changed, and yet in a way they have remained the same. For God's sake what is going to happen now?

STEPHEN SPENDER

HOW SHALL WE BE SAVED?*

However one views the German-Soviet Pact, it completes the return of our civilization, for some time at all events, to the game of power politics. The voices of all but the most strongly entrenched politicians are silenced or meaningless, even the vociferous orthodoxy of the Communists in the democratic countries is made as ineffectual in relation to Russian policy as is that of the Nazis in the Italian Tyrol in relation to Germany. Public matters are decided in secret in a far-removed Valhalla by conferences of war lords, decisions are transmitted in code telegrams, sudden proclamations carried out by armies and aeroplanes.

The abandonment of effective discussion dates from September, 1938. Before that there was a period of some years when protests about China, Spain, Austria, Czechoslovakia, seemed of some importance. Many writers were drawn into political activities, and some of the younger ones were killed in Spain.

The surrender of all political discussion before power and war leaves not only writers but all thinking people in a position of comparative isolation. The history that is being made in our time is different from and worse than the pictures of a world ordered and devout, in the minds of Christians, fulfilled and well-adjusted, in the minds of psychologists, offering immense prosperity to all, in the minds of some scientists. The Christian, the psychologically free and the scientifically distributed worlds all seem attain-

**Pain, Sex and Time*, by Gerald Heard (Cassel, 10s. 6d. net); *After Many a Summer*, by Aldous Huxley (Chatto and Windus, 7s. 6d. net); *The Idea of a Christian Society*, by T. S. Eliot (Faber and Faber, 5s. net); *The Fate of Homo Sapiens*, by H. G. Wells (Secker and Warburg, 7s. 6d. net).

able with good will and energy. Any of them would remove most of our present ills and enormously increase the sum of happiness. Yet power remains in the hands of those who, equipped with all the resources of modern machinery, are tied to the worst aims of traditional conquest and greed.

The power of certain interests is the dominating political evil of today. Yet to remove it, the exercise of a power as ruthless as theirs is necessary, and this would be bound to lead to destruction. The causes of political despair today are two: the contrast between the world as it is and as it might be; and the problem of power.

Four well-known writers, Gerald Heard, Aldous Huxley, H. G. Wells and T. S. Eliot have recently produced books dealing with this situation. All of them agree that the condition of the world is desperate, and that unless something which they recommend is done, catastrophe will follow. They only disagree about what it is essential to do.

None of them looks any longer to a political party for the way out. All agree that there must be a change in the mentality of men living today if we are to be saved. One might divide their attitudes of mind into those of two saints (Gerald Heard and Aldous Huxley), one Churchwarden (T. S. Eliot), and one old-fashioned liberal sinner (H. G. Wells).

The position of Huxley and Heard is now openly mystical. They perform spiritual exercises, they enjoy supernatural experiences, they practice Yogi, they fast, they set aside special hours of the day for meditation, and they seek to exist on a non-human plane outside time altogether. The theme of Aldous Huxley's novel is that all human action is evil, so we must seek to exist within timeless eternity. The degree of revelation which they achieve depends on the degree of saintliness which they attain in their lives, because revelation is to them a direct result of their way of living. One cannot read their books without asking Is it right that they should be living in Hollywood?, and wondering whether one couldn't oneself submit to yogi

exercises in such a pleasant climate. And these questions are justified because Huxley and Heard are really out to set examples for saving the world.

Fortunately perhaps, Mr. Eliot does not have to be a saint, for his task is not the revelation of a new truth but the application of an old dogma and orthodoxy to the conditions of the modern world. This makes it possible to approach him more critically, for one knows the tradition within which he is trying to live. It is possible to admire, sneer at or dismiss Heard and Huxley, but one has to postpone judgement on their experiment until one has seen more of the results.

Pain Sex and Time is not the work of a scientist, philosopher, or poet, any of whom has a certain standard of accuracy within certain conventions in his use of words. Mr. Heard's arguments are based almost entirely on a skilful use of false analogies between the physical world and the mind of the individual. What is in literal fact a false analogy may be a very effective poetic metaphor, yet Mr. Heard intends his metaphors to be taken literally. Thus his whole thesis rests on an assumption that a time has arrived in the evolution in the psyche in which the mind of man can take a great leap forward, corresponding to a mutation in the physical world. Evolution has broken down in the physical world and remains to evolve in the psychical. The birth pangs of this change are to be found in the excess of pain and sexual activity in human life, both of which are waste forces to be directed to a more purposive end.

Probably experts would find much to criticise in Mr. Heard's historic and scientific sketches which fill up more than half of his book. But at the end, one finds something which does not depend on the accuracy of these arguments—a vision of a new society with three orders, those who are seeking their own physical salvation, those who are dispassionate and disinterested administrators of power, and those whom he describes as the “neo-Brahmins”.

Gerald Heard expresses with the greatest conviction the view that a change in society must take place first of all in

the minds of individuals, since political and economic systems are only projections of the minds of contemporaries. To those who are beginning to despair of the view that a fundamental change in the economic system will result automatically in the classless society, regardless of the means used by the "dictatorship of the proletariat", Mr. Heard's view will seem the antithesis of everything they have accepted, and they may, for that very reason, find that it makes them think again. Mr. Heard does not attempt to solve the problem of power—he tries to remove the idea of power from men's minds altogether, and substitute for it a psycho-analysed bureaucracy. Nevertheless, he leaves one feeling—as does also Mr. Eliot in his picture of a new Christendom—that the possessors of today are hardly likely to yield up their power before the attractions of the good life; which means that power must either be wrested from them, or we must wait for a total collapse of productivity: and it is difficult to believe that a psychological mutation or a Christian revival would spring from another post-war period. All the same, if we begin to doubt the effectiveness of political systems, the only hope lies in a change within individuals, and Mr. Heard's book points to that.

I take it that Mr. Huxley is a disciple to Mr. Heard, and that the portrait of Propter, in *After Many A Summer*, the prophet of "timeless eternity" is suggested by Mr. Heard, just as D. H. Lawrence suggested a prophetic character in another of his novels. Mr. Huxley, like most disciples, already shows signs of turning the gospel inside-out. Infected by Huxley's hatred of human existence, Heardism becomes a quest for escape from the body, and set against the portrait of the timeless Propter, Mr. Huxley makes the most savage of all his attacks on life today, in the eighteenth century, and, by implication, two hundred years or so hence. The diary of the Fifth Earl is the best pastiche he has written, and I only wish that he had, by some ingenious time device, written the whole novel from the point of view of this eccentric living in the Eighteenth Century. As a novel, the book is worse than most Aldous Huxley,

which amounts to saying that the characterization is always stereotyped, and at times wildly bad. The worst character is Pete, a communist-scientist simpleton whom Mr. Huxley uses as a kind of butt throughout the book. However this does not prevent him from suddenly on p. 227 filling poor Pete's mind with an encyclopaedic Huxley-Heard meditation on the modern novel. "Because, if you considered them dispassionately, nothing could be more silly and squalid than the themes of *Phédre*, or *Othello*, or *Wuthering Heights*, or the *Agamemnon*," etc., etc., *ad nauseam*. Yet, maddening as much of it is, this seems to me the most stimulating book Mr. Huxley has written.

Huxley, Heard and Wells all show a lively and fundamental grasp of the world-situation to-day. Mr. Eliot, although disturbed by Munich, seems curiously out of touch. His book reads like one of those letters in *The Times* in which the bald head of some Bishop is seen for the first time emerging from the egg-shell of a lifetime's complacency. In fact, *The Times* seems, from his quotations, to be his main source of information about the state of the world.

This is not to deny that Mr. Eliot is deeply concerned with events, or that he would like to see a very altered society. But all the same, as one reads his pages and considers the world he has to offer—a world of Church Education and no Birth Control—one recalls Mr. Propter's sweeping remark in Huxley's novel: "Unless you're steadily and unflaggingly cynical about the solemn twaddle that's talked by bishops and bankers and professors and politicians and all the rest of them, you're lost." I think the trouble with Eliot is that, like Henry James, he is at once impressed and confused by the European tradition. All his criticism is really a discussion of this problem: How far is the tradition transformed almost beyond recognition in modern life, and how far does it conform to appearances which are survivals from the past? His own best poetry, and his admiration for James Joyce, tell him that the tradition is something outrageous and even revolutionary. But at the

same time he has to "shore up" fragments from the past. He cannot accept the fact that the "tradition" today might be the Waste Land rather than the chapel among the ruins. Reading his poems, I feel that "The awful daring of a moment's surrender" forsook him at some moment, and that now he is left looking for the beatific vision amongst the obituary notices of *The Times*. But I hope I may be wrong.

It is rather a relief after so much high thought to find oneself in the company of that unrepentant sinner H. G. Wells. A relief until one reads his concluding pages which are a frank confession of despair. He examines the world situation against a biological and historical background, in the spirit of his *Outline of History* and *Science of Life*. Readers of Huxley, Heard and Eliot, should read also this book, for his broad and complete survey has an element of humility before the facts which they lack. After reading T. S. Eliot, it is specially useful to be reminded of the Church's record in education and social reform.

H. G. Wells believes, like the others, that if *Homo Sapiens* was prepared even now to take thought and act on it, the world could avoid disaster. But his history and science do not console him with the promise of an evolutionary psychological mutation. Nevertheless, the fact that these four books should have been written contemporaneously offers a faint hope that if politics descend to a new level of force and cynicism, men may withdraw their support from their leaders. They may begin to look to the expert and the virtuous and the understanding to make a new world, instead of the powerful and the unscrupulous. But it is unlikely.

GEOFFREY GRIGSON

NEW POETRY

- The Map of Love.* Dylan Thomas (Dent, 7s. 6d.).
Poets of Tomorrow. First Selection (Hogarth Press, 6s.).
Poems. Christopher Caudwell (Bodley Head, 6s.).
Amber Innocent. Joan Adeney Easdale (Hogarth Press, 5s.).
The Unknown Known. Sturge Moore (Martin Secker, 5s.).
More People. Edgar Lee Masters (Appleton-Century, 10s. 6d.).
The Spirit Watches. Ruth Pitter (Cresset Press, 3s. 6d.).
Modern Poetry. Chosen by Robert Lynd (Nelson, 7s. 6d.).

There are two kinds of poet, among others. There are the ones who avoid the means for what they think are the ends of poetry: these should often be writing (or more probably reading) philosophy. There are the ones who get stuck in the means, and acknowledge, or devise for themselves, no end, or else stitch on some fake ends, which are borrowed and not held with full belief. The ends are 'message.' The means are natural objects; and, of course, natural objects are more than fish and dandelions. They include words, or rather language, and they include other poems, and the actual body, and the ego of the writer. In a poet from sixteen to twenty-five there are as a rule certain stages: imitation, interest in himself and interest in objects other than himself. For example, in Blake, there came first the *Poetical Sketches*, in which there are imitation, self-interest, and interest in other objects. Blake went on to his crusade against deism and natural religion in favour of forgiveness and "Imagination"; and since Imagination is "the real & eternal World of which this Vegetable Universe is but a faint shadow," Blake was forced to go beyond natural objects and turn against them—so far indeed that he declared to the slightly puzzled Crabb Robinson "I fear Wordsworth loves Nature, and Nature is the work of the Devil. The Devil is in us as far as we are Nature." Blake, in fact, pushed beyond the necessity

of art. But he only painted or wrote well because he also had "loved Nature," and so could design the eclipse for Thornton's *Pastorals* or describe the flowers in the second book of *Milton*. Samuel Palmer, who met Blake when he was nineteen, had been imitating Turner. He discovered from Blake that the Natural World was but the shadow of the Eternal World, and something to despise. Then he went down to Shoreham and within five years was writing in amazement "I really did not think there were those splendours in visible creation which I have lately seen." You cannot, in other words, counterfeit, or make a short cut to, Blake's ends. It is therefore at once right to suspect poetry by young writers which is too much a poetry of ends, which does not imitate enough, or which is not enough concerned with natural objects. Mr. Dylan Thomas's new book cannot be suspected for those reasons. His poems are still very much about himself. Suppose a remarkable urchin turned out the dirty lining of his magic pocket, in which he had casually collected the pubic hairs of a lion (page 5), two inches out of an indecent masterpiece by Fuseli, some recollections from Webster, a couple of Pleiades (glass alleys) and a comet, two or three stumps of coloured chalk, a tooth, some screwed-up counterfoils from sixpenny postal-orders, nail-parings, a sucked-out tin of condensed milk, a pill-box of maggots, and one of Joanna Southcott's chests. Suppose this pile were divided into *merzbild* poems and short stories—there would be *The Map of Love*; or very nearly, because there is something extra by this time in some of Mr. Thomas's poems which has little to do with the contents of a natural pocket. There is some talk of love other than self-love:

I know her scrubbed and sour humble hands

Lie with religion in their cramp.

Other examples are poems 3, 4 and 9. This book still contains ripe nonsense which pretends to be sensual wisdom; but the poems are better written, and sound less monotonous. Whether a better and saner poetry will emerge from these poems (as *Songs of Innocence* emerged from *Fair Elenor*)

I do not know.

Taken together, Christopher Caudwell's *Poems* and *The Map of Love* show up one another's faults. Caudwell, who was an intelligent, knowing writer, knew too much about those ends which the sensual means-fuddled Dylan Thomas has not reached. As one can see from his *Illusion and Reality*, Caudwell had great difficulty in writing; and his poems, clear enough in what is said, are some of them heavy-going pastiche; but good ironic splinters occur in them (Ruskin is: "the organ-voiced old maid of art"); Also the epigram on Dryden:

He made the eyes of Logic glow,
His curse anticipated Fate
His serene justice to his foe
Adds to the list of virtues, hate.

In *Poets of Tomorrow* there are poems by Peter Hewett (1914), H. B. Mallalieu (1914), Ruthven Todd (1914) and Robert Waller (1913). I admired, or at least enjoyed, all except three of Mr. Todd's poems, none of Mr. Mallalieu's, none of Mr. Waller's and four or five lines from Mr. Hewett. Mr. Todd's poems are a little dotty, like music hall acts in wide trousers; but they are neat, with few slips in the act, and the wide trousers conceal a moral: in other words, the dotty tumbling is not entirely for its own sake. He imitates (Louis MacNeice, for example, and Norman Cameron), he has a look at objects, if not with great attention:

I remembered the cast foal lying where it died,
Which we buried, one evening, above high-tide;
And the three rams that smashed the fank-gate,
Running loose for five days on the moor
Before we could catch them—far too late
To prevent an early lambing the next year.

—and his poems keep together, but more with the string of shape and rhyme, than with skeleton sketches of close sound.

As for the others:—

Mr. Hewett. Velvety with some C.P. ribbons tied on, but

the thatch was mossy and the well was rust
 the hollow hogweed grew beside the barn, etc.
 Expectations are justified.

Mr. Mallalieu. Scraggy, à la mode, and watery in a gentle way

Between my words and you
 Equation is always a guess:
 The sense which you construe
 Has shifted into stress.

But he has written other poems which are more effective.

Mr. Waller:

Our chaste ambition the last evasion punished.

So far, so trite.

The only other book by a young or youngish poet I have had to read is Miss Easdale's *Amber Innocent*. There seems to be an understanding that bad verse must always be treated more gently than bad fiction. But this long poem is too like a novel: it is like a dew-on-the-grass first novel by a daughter of a member of the Book Society's panel who has mixed her *Wuthering Heights* with some Maeterlinck and some Lolly Willowses.

Amber heard the tiny moan of a child-voice
 Ill, and far away in the turret.

Megathy had woken!

No. And there is no possibility of changing "no" to "yes" over the books by Mr. Sturge Moore, Mr. Edgar Lee Masters and Miss Pitter, or the anthology chosen by Mr. Robert Lynd. Mr. Moore has spent many years—most of his years—in sincere contemplation of the difficulties and felicities of life and art, but I am bound to say that I have enjoyed very little in his collected poems. He has never been very nimble in the means. The long poem about Sigurd in this book resembles, alas, a museum crocodile; and it is melancholy that this represents the other poems which follow:

Shall Hope's Fight bud unfurl a flush
 As though rose grew

Through her the bush
From me the soil.

This poetry is end without means. Mr. Masters must be living still in the fame which he earned from his *Spoon River Anthology*: have a look at him as an American realist, an adulterated and decayed Crabbe, and as America's own Wilfred Gibson:

Miss Pitter, a Hawthornden prizewoman, writes poetry of the kind which Mr. Lynd likes to put in anthologies—neat poetry, poetry which seems to say something spiritual by way of something natural, but poetry, like fake painting, which would show up badly under X-rays and the microscope. The name of her book postulates what are called imprecisely 'spiritual values,' but such values are not called into activity by naming them: they are a matter, for one important thing, of the language. Miss Pitter's verse is a bit choppy "And one the livid lasting-pea." No again. And No for "Maggie too, the moon-eyed maid," and much else. Miss Pitter comes pretty close to illumination and a true poem in *Rare Birds*, if you subtract the ludicrous first stanza; but the best analogy I know for her poems—including even this poem—are the pictures which come wistfully up from the past, or rather from Newlyn, to the Royal Academy, for the tempera and watercolour room.

Mr. Lynd's anthology is that room. Or it is the Big Bed of Ware combined with the Procrustean bed, in which, humble-jumbled or stretched or curtailed to fit, they all lie most curiously together—Hardy with Ernest Rhys, Yeats with Humbert Wolfe, Housman with Squire, Eliot with Sylvia Lynd, Auden with Miss Pitter, naturally.

His book will become interesting when it turns up for threepence in Faringdon Road as a sociological exhibit for some new Halévy of the next century. Meanwhile I propose to cover myself by quoting from the preface "I have omitted Mr. W. B. Yeats's *Lake Isle of Innisfree*, not because I do not think it is a beautiful poem, but because Mr. Yeats seems to me to have written equally beautiful poems which are less widely known." A penetrating intuition.

SELECTED NOTICES

New Writing, No. 3 Christmas 1939 (Hogarth Press 7/6 net) is a full throated swansong, with a hint of resurrection, of the bi-annual volume with which we are familiar. It is also one of the best, and though lacking in highlights has a general standard which permits no lapses. *New Writing* can be divided into (1) literary contributions and (2) its own special brand of nightmare reportage. Nightmares of authentic danger or poverty, of Fascist bullets, coalmines falling in, unemployment and starvation. The most effective of these are by John Lepper (death by Moors), B. L. Coombes (twenty tons of coal), Walter Allen (accidental murder), Sam Ross (no shoes), Lionel Davidson (aged seventeen) (stealing from hunger), and G. D. Skelton (stealing by mistake) . . . Miss Lewin's nightmare is of a day in a hospital, and Jan Petersen's of smuggling books into Germany. All these hit the soft spot. On the literary side Auden contributes one fine poem in American, MacNeice some of his lyrical journalism, Spender an unusual poem, and Plomer an amusing ballad. The criticism is dull except for an astonishing article about the futurist Maiakovsky, who may have been a great poet but must have been an intolerable man. More quotations would have helped. There is a good story by Pritchett, in the *Beany Eye* tradition, a nice article by Orwell on Marrakech, and some drear photographs including the inevitable group of Auden, Spender, and Isherwood without which any new magazine looks naked. Not the heights of other New Writings, and not the depths, excellent value for the money, and John Lehmann exhibits the conjuror's power by which he produces time after time unknown names who turn out articles both unusual and readable.

The British at Home by Pont. Collins 5/-. These drawings from Punch reveal an original artist whom one can compare with Thurber. An English Thurber, whose use of shading produces a muddy effect, through which loom realistic and gruesome faces of our Middle Class, the belles and beaux of the Blokeage. The jokes are subtle, the drawing excellent and entitle Pont of Punch to the front rank of English humorists. After laughing over his impressions of a cocktail party one realises that, with the best of Beachcomber or Gubbins, he is to be congratulated on the purity and brutality of his observation, and the total absence of that fashionable defect of English humour, the undercurrent of pathos. No Little Men here. Well worth buying.

Homes Sweet Homes by Osbert Lancaster. John Murray 6/-. This is a sequel to *From Pillar to Post*, and does for interior decoration what the companion volume did for architecture. Indispensable to anyone interested in the English home, these observant drawings which never overdo their subject, are a delight. They teach a great deal, though Mr. Lancaster is perhaps not sufficiently appreciative of the eighteenth century owing to his nostalgia for the nineteenth. His contempt for the age we live in is justified by his impressions of *Stockbroker Tudor*, *Functional*, *Curzon Street Baroque* etc. The letterpress is somewhat urbane and uneasy, except where a Mr. Chips interior such as *Anglican* is in question. An edition in colour of the two books in one with less letterpress is now essential. Perfect Christmas present.

The Blaze of Noon by Rayner Heppenstall. Secker & Warburg 7/6d. Novel (noticed by *Evening Standard* for its frankness), about the love life of a blind masseur in a Cornish manor. Excellent picture of English country life in decadence. The blind man, like a D. H. Lawrence night-watchman, prowls round the establishment finding the women unawakened and the men wanting. An irritating, sensitive, well-written book, where the womaniser writes

about his fellows with the contempt with which the military describe politicians, or the rich the poor. As social comment interesting, as a sexual boast, somewhat mystical, verbose, and humourless. Specimen dialogue. 'I said to myself "now she is one and indivisible, a whole" . . . she said "I feel whole, oh Louis, I am whole."' Introduction by Elisabeth Bowen.

Down River by John Lehmann: Cresset Press. 12/6d. Nostalgic reading for all Danube lovers, for those who know Vienna, Bratislava, Budapest, who have descended the Kazan and can convert Lei into Leva. This is a model for the travel book of the future, in which political, economical and human problems are equally mixed, and cemented by the love of the author for the country which he knows so well. It is marred by a most pedestrian style which renders the facts duller than they need be, and makes one concentrate on the descriptive passages. Plenty of good photographs make this a book which every mittel-european will delight to handle, and for the student of foreign affairs it is comprehensive and up to date.

The Patience of Maigret, by Georges Simenon. (Routledge 7/6 net). Should be a favourite not only with detective story fans, but also with everyone who knows and likes France. Quick-moving, slick and snappy, it towers above its English counterparts. Divided into two halves. First murder in Paris, second death at Concarneau. In both cases Maigret solves the problem to the satisfaction of the Sureté and ourselves. His method is patience, or the battle of nerves, and in the end the criminal almost turns the key on himself. Strongly recommended for its realism and characterisation, especially the first part which takes you into the bars of the Latin Quarter, out to cheap hotels in the suburbs, back to the *George V*. Simenon knows his Paris, and the people too. He presents them with a clarity and simplicity which makes him more satisfying to read than most novelists. The dust cover, by E. MacKnight Kauffer, deserves a special mention.

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